

## Flooding Safety Tips

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“As the Commonwealth prepares for the second storm of the week, with its strong winds and driving rains, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency has issued a number of safety tips to assist residents regarding the potential of flooding throughout the region, be it inland or along the coast,” stated MEMA Director Don Boyce. “Flooding continues to be the most common and costly type of emergency Massachusetts faces, annually.”

- **CONTINUALLY MONITOR THE MEDIA** – Be aware of the storm’s impact on your community.
- **MONITOR STREAM AND URBAN STREET FLOODING** – For those living in areas that are prone to localized flooding, closely watch small streams and low-lying areas for early flooding. Make sure street catch basins are cleared.
- **BE AWARE OF THE TIMES OF HIGH TIDES** – With astronomically high tides, coastal regions can be impacted.
- **ENSURE YOUR HOME IS READY** – Minimize damage from basement flooding by elevating utilities, and materials that could be damaged by limited basement flooding.
- **HEED EVACUATION REQUESTS** – Listen to local Public Safety officials. Follow recommended evacuation routes, shortcuts may be blocked or dangerous.
- **DO NOT WALK THROUGH FLOWING WATER** – Drowning is the number one cause of flood deaths. Most of these drownings occur during flash floods. Flash flood waters move at very fast speeds and can roll boulders, sweep away cars, tear out trees, destroy buildings, and obliterate bridges. Six inches of swiftly moving water can knock you off of your feet. If you must walk through a flooded area, use a pole or stick to ensure that the ground is still there and solid, even where the water is not flowing.
- **DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH A FLOODED AREA** – More people drown in their cars than anywhere else. Cars can be swept away in just 2 feet of moving water. Do not drive around road barriers. They are there for a reason. The road or bridge may be washed out or structurally unsound. If your car becomes trapped in floodwaters, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground. Many deaths have resulted from attempts to move stalled vehicles.
- **AVOID POWER LINES AND ELECTRICAL WIRES** – Electrocutation is also a major killer in floods. Electrical current can travel through water. Report downed power lines to your utility company or local emergency manager. Always assumed a downed wire is a live wire.
- **LOOK BEFORE YOU STEP** – After a flood, the ground and floors are covered with debris, including broken bottles and nails. Floors and stairs that have been covered with mud can be very slippery.
- **BE ALERT FOR GAS LEAKS** – Do not turn on electric lights, but use a flashlight to inspect for damage. A spark from the light switch could cause an explosion or fire. Do not smoke or use candles, lanterns or open flames unless you are sure that the gas has been turned off and the area has been aired out.

- **CARBON MONOXIDE EXHAUST KILLS** – Only use camping stoves, generators or other gasoline-powered machines outdoors. Fumes from charcoal are especially deadly, so never use indoors.
- **CLEAN EVERYTHING THAT GETS WET** – Floodwaters have probably picked up sewage and chemicals from roads, farms and factories. Spoiled food and flooded medicines and cosmetics are health hazards. When in doubt, throw them away.
- **BE PREPARED FOR A ROUGH TIME** – Recovering from a flood is a big job. It is rough on the body and the spirit. The aftereffects of this type of disaster on you and your family may last a long time. Consult a health professional on how to recognize and care for anxiety, stress and fatigue.
- **MEMA officials also remind residents who have experienced flood damage to take photographs as soon as possible.** Those who have a flood insurance policy should contact the insurance company or agent who wrote the policy as soon as possible in order to file a claim. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) through the Federal Insurance Administration (FIA). The NFIP makes flood insurance available in communities that adopt and enforce ordinances to reduce flood damage.